Part Two

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GRAND OPERA HOUSE—COMING ATTRACTIONS

TONIGHT	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
"SIS HOPKINS"	"FIFTY MILES FROM BOSTON"	"THE GREAT DIVIDE"

MABEL BROWNELL, AS "RUTH JORDAN," IN "THE GREAT DIVIDE," AT THE GRAND FRIDAY AND SATURDAY.

"SIS HOPKINS," AT THE GRAND TONIGHT.

EDWIN MORDANT, AS "STEPHEN GHENT," IN "THE GREAT DIVIDE," AT THE GRAND, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY.

HOW HENRY MILLER CASTS HIS PRODUCTIONS

"Essential That an Actor Be Thoroughly Familiar With the King's English"---To Be a Good Actor Is Easier Than to Be a Bad One---Main Requirements of the Stage

Henry Miller, though one of America's best known and capable actors, for more than a quarter of a century, has won new fame as a producing manager through his highly successful productions. "The Servant in the House," "The Comet," "The Winter Feast," "The Bewitching of Helen," and last, but what is considered most important of all, "The Great Divide," which is to be the attraction at the Grand Opera House for two night beginning Friday. Henry Miller has without a doubt built up a reputation as a producer that is second to none in this country, in view of the fact that he has such stars as Margaret Anglin, Madame Mazimova, Isabelle Irving and Tyrone Power under his managerial wing. Mr. Miller in years gone by, has visited Ogden presenting plays like "Captain Darcy of the Guards," "Heartsease," and only last season—in the latter part of June—he presented "The Great Divide" to Ogdenites and since then anything bearing the trade mark of America's most famous actor manager is sure of a cordial welcome. Only a week or two has passed since Miller has made a production that will go down in the annals of the theater as one of the most daring plays ever presented to an American audience. "The Winter Feast," is what it was called, written, too, by the author of "The Servant in the House," which is now in its third year at the Savoy theater, in New York city.

The First Play.

For nine months the manuscript of the first named play on Mr. Miller's desk, and though often requested by Charles Rann Kennedy (the author) to destroy it, Miller awaited what he thought was his chance to see it acted on a stage. The chance presented itself a week ago last Monday when the actor manager was not playing. On that day he called the associate players together and told them of his plan to present the new play for one night only at the Savoy theater, where "The Servant in the House" was meeting with unprecedented success. These famous actors, including Edith Wynne Matthison, Tyrone Power, Walter Hampden, Arthur Lewis, Charles Dalton and others of equal prominence, fell in with the scheme, and last Friday Miller announced his production ready for the public to see it, but for one performance only. What the press of the metropolis said of the play is now ancient history, and sufficient to say that one performance of "The Winter Feast" was enough to convince Miller that the American play lover does not want a tragedy clothed, as it were, in modern dress.

His Other Side.

Now for the other side of this peculiar man. When "The Great Divide" was first put on in New York, Miller was more than anxious that his friend, Baron von Sternberg, the German ambassador, see the play; and he suggested that the German minister come to New York to witness a performance of what the metropolitan reviewers had called "The Long Waited Great American Play." After many special performances had been arranged for, only to be given up at the last moment, Mr. Miller decided if "the mountain wouldn't come to Mohammed, Mohammed would go to the mountain." So, despite the fact that all of the seats for the Princess theater—where "The Great Divide" had been playing for almost two years—had been sold for the performance on Friday, January 7, 1907, Miller at the suggestion of Baron von Sternberg, assisted by Miss Anglin and his company, presented "The Great Divide" on the stage of the Cochrane galleries in Wasaington, on that night, refunding to the New York theater-goers more than $1,500. What the press of the country said of this special performance would fill a book, and Miller was accused of advertising the play at the expense of the different diplomatic corps. Of course this accusation was easily disproved by his most recent acts, such as stopping the run of one of his plays at the Powers theater, Chicago, so that a performance of it could be given for the special edification of the faculty of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. This sort of thing is common with Miller. His instructions to his many business representatoves are such that special performances of "The Great Divide" and all other plays under his management may be given free of any cost whatever before classes in English literature, in any and all parts of American.

Casting His Production.

"In this way," says Mr. Miller, "I hope to gain serious consideration for the theater in this country. In casting my productions I have always held that it is essential that an actor be thoroughly familiar with 'the king's English,' as it is called, and that to be a good actor, speaking histrionically, is infinitely easier than to be a bad one. This is a proposition that may sound strange to many critics and reviewers who find nothing but faultiness in the methods used and the results obtained by the majority of players. They may be right in their contentions, probably they are, but that does not prove the untenableness of the foregoing. The assertion I make is not that all actors are highly successful in the practice of their art, but they should be so. One of the great pities of life is that most folk insist upon doing things the hardest way, and, therefore, the wrong way.

"It is much easier to do a thing right than wrong, wether it be a simple daily duty, a momentous business transaction, or the delineations of a character in a play. Although this truth is obvious, it is amazing how many persons fail to see it. Actors are particularly prone to overlook this natural law. Years of observation have taught me that very few exponents of dramatic portrayal concern themselves with the self-evident. They go out of their way to do the unnatural and the 'stagy' thing. I think some explanation of this lies in the common designation of their calling. Being called 'actors,' they think it incumbent upon themselves to 'act,' and many of them do it with energy, persistence and conscientiousness worthy of a better cause. That the art has been known as acting has done it harm from which it may never recover. When a man or a woman studies a part, the sole idea should be the natural and therefore proper portrayal of the character, the comporting of self in the manner that common sense and intelligence would dictate, without absurd posturing and grimacing or self-consciousness and awkward concern.

The Main Requirement.

"The main requirement for those who would be good actors is that they do on the stage what they would do in ordinary life under the same circumstances. This applies to 'character' as well as 'straight' work. This does not mean that an actor's performance should be without variety. The rule would not restrict one to his own possibly commonplace daily routine and gesture. It is merely that, after studying the character intelligently and understanding its intricacies and attributes, he should speak its lines and assume its attitudes in a manner entirely natural to himself.

As to Subtlety in Acting.

"We often hear of subtlety in acting, and of inspiration. In the last analysis, it is the bad actors who are subtle and inspired, for only by some curious psychological process could some of them arrive at the amazingly unhuman and unintelligent conclusions they present. What is commonly called 'subtlety' is nothing more than a well directed and properly directed intelligence, which studies a character and a situation closely, arriving at a conclusion by process of mind, and expressing thoughts and emotions under rational mental direction. The 'subtle' actor is simply one who knows what to do and has sufficient self-hestraint to do it in a perfectly natural way. I hold that the bad actor does not know what to do, or, if he has some slight inkling of the 'how to do it,' he leaves his intelligence at home, walks all around the right way of doing it, and thus, as a natural consequences, produces results that were never conceived by the playwright or dreamed of in the philosophy of the playgoer. It takes genuine 'subtlety' to attain some of the remarkable efforts produced by some who regard themselves as finished actors.

"Some persons may take exceptions to the foregoing hypothesis and conclusion by saying that many players who meet the above requirements have risen to no great fame and give no promise of stepping into the ranks of the immortals. The subject in hand is good acting, not 'genius.' We are considering the man or woman who plays the ordinary part, not the tragedy king or queen—the second old man, the leading juvenile, the woman who takes a 'character hit.' It is in this rank and file where this fine intelligence or the lack of it is more noticed. Genius is a matter of personality and temperament as well as of intellect and training. Two actors might play the same part in exactly the same way, identical in gesture, inflection, in movement, and in business, and one might awake the audience to clamorous enthusiasm, while the other would leave it cold and unresponsive. The first has within him that illuminating spirit that lays bare the soul of the character. Intelligence and common sense are but a part of his equipment. Behind them are the qualities that mark the man of destiny. Yet the mind and discretion of the other, when placed outside the shadow cast by genius, might render him conspicuous and place him in a revered position.

"Frequently the critics say, 'He gave an intellectual performance, but his work was not convincing.' That man probably suffered limitations of temperament through which he was unsuited to the role in hand. Some very good actors, more's the pity, are unfortunate in their personality to this extent. When one fails to make a good impression for this reason, it is hard for him that critics and spectators do not give him his due for technical merit. It is remarkable how few persons are able to judge an actor's work strictly on its worth as representing that which it is expected to reproduce.

"The majority of those who attend the theaters are open to impressions only. If the general effect of a payer's work is pleasing, they praise. What may be its value technieally they neither know nor care. If he is 'unsuited to the role' he gets no credit and scant sympathy. Therefore, after all is said, it would seem that personality is the great force in acting, just as it is in the pulpit, the senate or the counting house."

TONIGHT

"Sis Hopkins," that delightfully fragrant play of country life in the Hoosier state, which is now on its tenth tour, has been booked for an engagement at the Grand tonight. Miss Rose Melville, the originator of the peculiarly fascinating type of stage character represented by "Sis Hopkins," is playing the title role again and is supported by a company, the equal of any she has had yet.

"Obadiah," the undertaker is one of the quaint character bits of the play. He carries a tape measure with him always to measure prospective customers; a hollow cough fills him with joy and rumor of accident; death and devastation are his constant hope. He writes epitaphs of rare wit and humor in which the follies and foibles of the good people of Posey county art hit off with delightful simplicity. He wears an exaggerated costume of deep mourning and lives in the hope of death.

Mr. J. R. Stirling, Miss Melville's manager, has put out an entirely new production and the play has been amplified and improved until now it has reached the acme of perfection. The costuming is all new and the specialties which have been so delightful a feature of previous engagements have been changed and added to until now there is left nothing to be desired. This is especially true of the famous seminary scene, which has been improved to the uttermost.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20.

Cohan & Harris, under whose management the George Cohan Musical comedy, "Fifty Miles From Boston," will be presented at the Grand next Wednesday, have again given the production a cast of well-known players.

Mr. Joseph Sparks, who appears as "Harrigan," has been formerly identified with May Irwin, being her leading comedian for several seasons. He also appeared with Arnold Daly in "John Bull's Other Island," and in several of Savage's productions.

Miss Suzanne Leonard Westford, is one of the most brilliant club women of the day. She was president of the New York Professional Woman's league, and has spoken many times before the most prominent clubs of the country.

Miss Westford is the sister of Miss Lillian Russell, and is a tall statuesque beauty, with a charming manner. She appeared in the Cohan play as a typical New England gossip, and her song, "Ain't it Awful" is said to be especially clever.

Miss Hazel Lowry appears as the demure New England postmistress, a role which is said to be well suited to her dainty personality. Mr. Cohan wrote the part especially for Miss Lowry and is said to have given her some good songs, "Jack and Jill" being the most catchy of them.

Mr. Thomas Emory is well known in the west. Last year he appeared in "The Three of Us" and the newspapers throughout the country gave him great credit for good work. Mr. Emory has appeared with Blanche Ring in "Vivian's Papas," with S. Miller Kent in "Raffles" and with stock companies in Boston, Milwaukee and in Denver in the latter city he played with the Catherine Countiss stock company.

Walter P. Richardson is also another player whose name is a familiar one in theatrical cities in San Francisco, Spokane, Tacoma, where he was prominent in stock companies. After the earthquake he came east and has since been with "When Knighthood Was in Flower," and with Adelaide Keim's company in New York.

Master Russell Pincus is a talented youngster, who appears as the unhappy "fat boy," who gets in everybody's way.

Master Percy Helton is said to have made a big hit on the coast as "Buster Brown." He is a born and bred child of the stage, having appeared since he was a little kiddie. The season before last, he played with Louis Mann and Clara Lipman in "Julie Bon-Bon," but at the close of this season stern parental authority will place Master Percy in a military school until he receives a good education.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, JAN. 22 AND 23.

The pictoral side of "The Great Divide," in which Henry Miller's special company is to appear at the Grand Friday and Saturday, Jan. 22 and 23, is said to be strikingly fascinating. The first two scenes are full of the atmosphere and color of the boundless west, prevaded by the spirit of mountains and plains. The first act setting represents a cabin on a cactus ranch in southern Arizona. The second act shows "The Roof of the World, a wild, magnificant spot at the top of the Rockies. Here on the great Continental Divide is fought out the conflict between the hero and the heroine—he, typifying the unfettered, lawless freedom of the mountain and desert, she reflecting the Puritan ideals of her New England home. The grandeur of the scene gives an almost epic background to this struggle of contrasted national temperaments of East and West. Stephen Ghent's abode in the Cordilleras overlooks a yawning canon and, spread out before it, is an impressive vista of vast distances across the mountain tops. It was just such a scene os this, viewed in all its gorgeous western coloring from moon to sunset, that inspired the imagination of William Vaughn Moody to write this drama of "The Great Divide," which was instantly hailed upon its presentation in New York City as "The Great American Play," everyone has been praying for. Mr. Moody was a college professor, a teacher of literature in the University of Chicago, and has been writing poetic dramas along classical Greek lines, but the voice of the West spoke to him one summer day on the top of the Continental Divide and he brought back its utterance to the East and West, the North and South, in the most notable drama of the past half century.

FEBRUARY 10.

Several writers on subjects of the stage are doing Florence Roberts honor by paralleling her career with that of the diva, Tetrazinni, who, under the management of the busy Hammerstein, made her bow to New York last season. Gotham hailed the singer as the wonderful artist that she is and worshipped with undiminished ardor at her shrine, even when chagrined at the intelligence that Tetrazinni had sung several seasons at the Tivoli theater, San Francisco, and at various other points on the Pacific coast. Still New York has properly and gamely stood staunchly by its first and correct judgment of the artist and has cheerfully continued to pay three and four times the price to hear her that the music lovers of the west paid. But it was something of a joke on old Father Knickerbocker.

And as it was with Tetrazinni, so it was with Florence Roberts. Miss Roberts for years has been a prime favorite in the far west, in fact so great a favorite that she made the record of four distinct tours over the same territory in the same season. She has been the source of chagrin to several prominent and talented stars through the co-operative comments of the western press. It is a matter of theatrical record that Miss Roberts outdraws any woman star in America in that territory. She has played a remarkable range of roles and always with a high degree of merited credit from the critics. Yet when Miss Roberts undertook her initial Broadway engagement three years ago, the Metropolis knew her not. The press announced her as an unknown, while the box office at the opening of the sale showed no signs of congestion. But in the morning following her first night, Miss Roberts awoke possessed of the high distinction, never before won, it is said, of having received the absolutely unanimous endorsement of the newspapers. Most of the critics were positively extravagant in praise of her art and the receipts soared commensurately. It was a great triumph for this splendid western actress, but she has remained faithful to the west, her tour to the coast and return being the feature of her season that takes most of her time each year. She makes her annual New York appearance but always in the spring, after her faithful west has passed upon her latest play. "The House of Bondage" Miss Roberts will offer to New York in April, but the western cities will all see it prior to that time. Miss Roberts regards "The House of Bond-